

Condom use : contraceptive and preventive issues in young adult population

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BACKGROUND

Condoms are largely used to prevent HIV at sexual debut and at the onset of new relationships by young adults in France as in other industrialised countries. However the increasing rates of abortion among the 15-25 years old age group since the middle of the 1990's suggest persistent contraceptive failures. Condoms are rarely used as a contraceptive method in the general population, and the conditions under which they are discontinued within a relationship are poorly understood.

METHOD

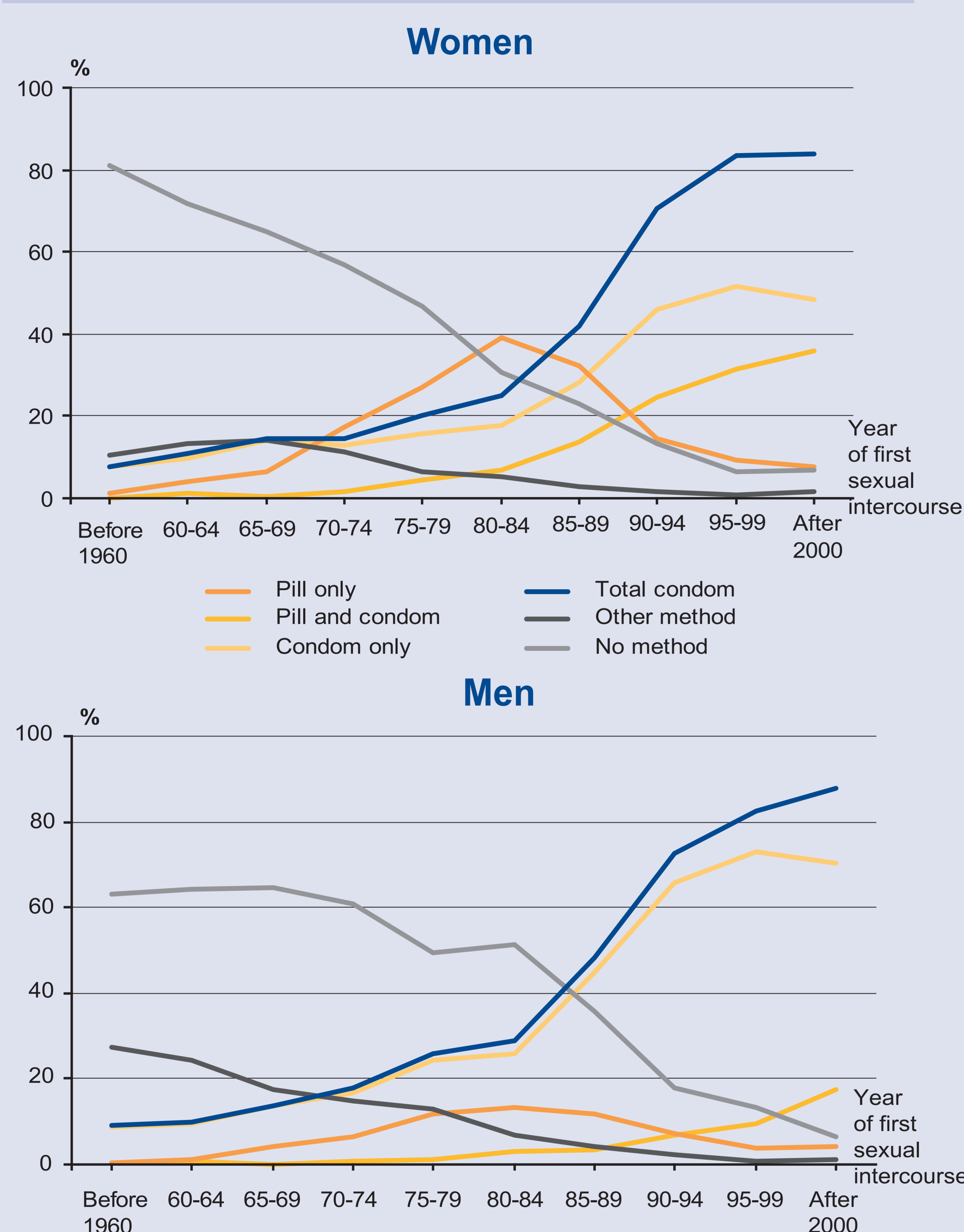
We presented data from the CSF survey (Contexte de la sexualité en France), a population-based survey, conducted by telephone in 2006. Participants are selected based on a two stage probability sampling design with post-stratification for age.

Response rate was high : 74.6%. A total of 1849 women and 1552 men aged 18 to 29 years were interviewed.

Confidence intervals and logistic regressions were performed taking into account the sampling design.

RESULTS

The use of condom and pill at first sexual intercourse for women and men



First sexual intercourses are well protected. The proportion of women and men reporting use of any contraceptive method at first sexual intercourse rose steadily. Today and for the last 15 years, more than 80% of women and men reported condom use.

Conditions by which women and men discontinue using a condom

When stopped using condom *	Stopped condom use in the 3 first months	Stopped condom use later	Total
Women 18-29 years	184	321	505
another contraception and HIV test	38.4 [31 - 46.5]	53.4 [47 - 59.6]	48.1 [4.3 - 5.3]
another contraception only	49.8 [41.8 - 57.8]	40.7 [34.6 - 47]	43.9 [39 - 48.9]
HIV test only	4.8 [2.2 - 9.9]	3.4 [1.6 - 6.9]	3.9 [2.3 - 6.5]
no contraception and no HIV test	7 [3.9 - 12.2]	2.6 [1.2 - 5.5]	4.2 [2.6 - 6.6]
Men 18-29 years	129	182	311
another contraception and HIV test	33.4 [24.6 - 43.6]	38 [30.1 - 46.5]	35.9 [29.9 - 42.4]
another contraception only	53 [42.8 - 62.9]	55 [5.5 - 8]	54.1 [47.5 - 60.5]
HIV test only	2.6 [0.6 - 10.1]	2.1 [0.6 - 7.9]	2.3 [0.9 - 6.1]
no contraception and no HIV test	11 [6 - 19.3]	4.9 [2.2 - 10.7]	7.7 [4.7 - 12.2]

* When first relationship lasted longer than 3 months

Almost a third of women and half of men aged 18 to 29 years stopped using condom during the first three months of the first relationship (p=0.005).

Another contraceptive method was generally used at that moment, except for 8% of these women and 10% of these men.

Factors associated with the lack of contraception when discontinuing using a condom

This lack of contraception is more frequent :

- for less educated people,
- for women and men who used a condom as a contraceptive at the beginning of the relationship,
- for those who did not talk with their first partner about contraception before the first intercourse.

No test was done with a non virgin partner for half women and men when stopping condom use.

CONCLUSION

These findings underline the need to explore in more detail the circumstances under which condom use ceases. They suggest that it is necessary to pursue policies promoting condom and other contraceptive method in early sexual life, especially to less well-off young people, and to strengthen the information available on HIV testing modalities.

(1) CSF for "contexte de la sexualité en France" : Sexual Behaviour in France.

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